

PHOTOGRAPHY/ GARY McKELLAR

Dale Berge, BYU professor of archaeology and director of dig at Camp Floyd, files artifacts found at the site. Berge says site should be preserved.

BYU crews unearthing Camp Floyd

By Carol Jensen
Deseret News correspondent

7 Oct 1985

CEDAR VALLEY — Using everything from bulldozers to dentist's picks, the archaeological teams excavating Camp Floyd also are digging up some interesting historical facts.

Dale Berge, director of the dig and a Brigham Young University professor of archaeology, said the site has local and national significance and should be preserved as a historic site.

Ironically, though, the best way to preserve an excavation is to cover it back up, he said.

But this dig has perhaps five more years of scraping and screening dirt before the project is through, and even then, if the federal government makes it a landmark, it could be restored and maintained as a museum camp rather than covered.

Archaeologists began uncovering the camp by finding a geologic bench mark and surveying from it to find the exact locations of buildings that had been charted on a map in 1859.

Where many of the buildings stood, a mound of clayish dirt is all that can be seen at first glance.

Berge said these mounds were caused because settlers removed timbers from the buildings after the soldiers left, leaving the adobe bricks exposed to the weather.

Weather eroded the bricks until they looked like no more than a melted heap of clay.

But underneath these heaps are a few layers of untouched adobe, which shovels and picks can reveal.

Berge said that once archaeologists are within two or three inches of the building floor, they discard their heavier

tools and start troweling the earth.

One of the three buildings excavated so far, a barracks, had caught on fire and the timbers of the roof had fallen in and been preserved.

In this case, shovels, even in the earlier stages of digging, couldn't be used, and trowels were the main tool.

However time-consuming or tedious the careful scraping may be, though, it has quite a bit to reveal.

The burned barracks, for example, showed the roof construction by its pattern of beams lying on the ground.

One of the rules of excavation, Berge said, is to leave an artifact where it is found until it has been photographed.

Had the beams been removed as they were uncovered, the roof pattern could not have been learned.

Photographs are used after the digging season is over to do research that will enhance the knowledge already gained about the site.

"For every day we dig," Berge said, "we do eight days of research."

Research may mean looking in a catalog to see where and when a certain button was made, scanning the military records to find out whose initials are on a pipe or studying manuals to figure out whether a certain metal part was used for a gun or a wagon.

Many of the buttons found at Camp Floyd, Berge said, were an 1820s style, even though the camp was occupied during the 1850s and 1860s.

"This suggested that production of the old style didn't cease immediately when the new style was introduced.

See CAMP FLOYD on U-2



Army boot is among artifacts found at camp.

Monday, June 9, 1986

Camp Floyd monument gives rise to questions

CEDAR VALLEY — The clear, haunting notes of Taps floated out over the now empty spaces of Camp Floyd, once the largest U.S. Army installation in the nation.

A squad with modern rifles fired a rapid, precise, three-volley salute. A group of young Civil War buffs in uniforms of that tragic conflict belched forth one smoky volley from muzzle loaders. The American Legion District 8 memorial service was over. Professor Gene Sessions of Weber State had given a brief history of Camp Floyd. Two wives of Legionnaires had laid a wreath on the bullet-scarred (by vandals) granite-metal monument that marks the cemetery, the only remaining portion of the camp except a restored commissary building. The small crowd left the shade of the few trees that provided protection from that hot Memorial Day sun.

The large monument in the center is to the "Officers, Soldiers and Civilian Employees" who died during the Utah campaign of the U.S. Army during the so-called Utah War. It does not mention any specific number. In neat rows on two sides of the cemetery are 84 flat markers — 83 soldiers and one civilian. The monument raises far more questions than it answers.

Unanswered questions are all I have run into trying to research it since then. No one with any authority or authenticity seems to know. I have yet to tackle the state archives.



Theron
H. Luke

AS IT LOOKS
TO LUKE

Camp Floyd, in Cedar Valley west of Utah Lake, was established in July of 1858, constructed during the next few months by soldiers, federal civilian and hired Mormon labor and dedicated in November. By July 1, 1861 it was a ghost spot. Some 300 to 400 buildings were razed so Mormons couldn't use them — although the latter appropriated some of the still remaining and usable building materials after the army left. The Civil War sounded the post's death knell. Both before and after the camp's demise it proved a substantial economic windfall for the Mormons.

Across-the-creek Fairfield had mushroomed to a town of about 4,000, one of the wildest in the West. Along with the camp, there were some 7,000 people — the third largest city in Utah at the time, next to Salt Lake and Provo. It soon shrank to fewer than 20 families.

Why Camp Floyd? It's too complicated to tell here and do it justice. A federal army of 2,500 (which reached nearly 3,000 at the camp) came

west to escort a new governor to replace the fired Brigham Young and to put down, if necessary, a supposed rebellion among the Mormons that never really existed in the dictionary sense. Which is not to say everything was peachy cream out here in Utah and the Mormons and federal officials were in constant verbal, moral and cultural conflict. Leaves a lot of questions? It certainly does. In two hours I could pretty well answer them, but not here.

The graves in the cemetery, however many there were, lay unmarked for years after their original markers were taken by time and whatever. In the early 1960s, District 8 of the American Legion placed 84 markers from a list furnished probably by the state or the War Department. On them were engraved the name, rank, outfit and death date — probably at a very considerable expense to the Legion.

Eighty-three of them are soldiers. The 84th reads: John McCue, Civilian, Ordnance Department, Nov. 20, 1858. Which starts the unanswered questions.

There had to be more than one civilian die during the camp period. The government employed hundreds. Where are they? In the cemetery unmarked and unlisted. In the old Fairfield civilian cemetery where there are several unmarked graves? In an unmarked and forgotten cemetery in the area? The questions all need answers, but I don't know if they will ever be forthcoming.

Several death dates listed occurred before the Army ever reached Camp Floyd, while it was on the trail coming out here and in winter camp at Camp Scott near Fort Bridger. A reliable historian assures me the ones at Camp Scott were disinterred and brought to Camp Floyd. It is reasonable to assume the rest were too.

In the cemetery is Sgt. Ralph Pike, Company I, 10th infantry. He got in an argument with Mormon Howard Spencer over a haying or grazing dispute, in Rush Valley and slugged Spencer with his gun barrel, seriously injuring him. Taken to Salt Lake for trial, Pike met his end when Spencer stepped out from an alley and shot him dead as he was being escorted by two law officers. Spencer was tried and acquitted. Men of Pike's company raided nearby Cedar Fort and burned outbuildings, haystacks — the only serious difficulty between civilians and Camp Floyd soldiers.

It's one of the things we know the answers to. What of the unanswered questions about the cemetery? There are several. If I find any of the answers, I'll let you know.

BYU archaeology expert named new chairman of anthropology department

15 Mar 1982

PROVO — Anthropology professor Donald W. Forsyth is the new chairman of the Brigham Young University Department of Anthropology, replacing John L. Sorenson, who is retiring in June.

His appointment began with the spring term in April.

Forsyth came to BYU in 1979 after teaching at Midland College in Texas for two years.

His expertise is in Southwestern, Mesoafrican and Great Basin archaeology. He has participated in and directed many excavation projects, archaeological surveys and laboratory analyses in Mexico, Guatemala and various locations in Utah.

He is now involved in the analysis of ceramic, lithic and faunal materials recovered from previously excavated sites in Utah County.

Forsyth received his bachelor's degree in 1971 and master's degree in 1972, both from BYU. He received his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in 1979.

He is a member of the Society for American Archaeology, the American Society of Ethnohistory and the Utah Professional Archaeological Council.

He has published many papers and reports in professional journals and presented his work at several conferences.



Donald W. Forsyth